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FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8175  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 4416  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 2060  
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO 4397  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 3492  
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 8515  
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORPORATION  
INFO RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC  
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI//J3/J332/J52//  
RHMFIUU/CDRUSARPAC FT SHAFTER HI//APCW/APOP//

UNCLAS COLOMBO 000506

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/INS, S/CT and DS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [CE](#)

SUBJECT: SRI LANKA: PARCEL BOMB ON TRAIN KILLS NINE AT SUBURBAN STATION

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: A parcel bomb on a train detonated at a suburban Colombo station on May 26 causing nine deaths and wounding more than seventy. It was unclear whether the bomb was triggered by a remote control (such as a cell phone) or a timer. The government of Sri Lanka blamed the attack on the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Embassy has received no reports of U.S. citizens being killed or wounded in the incident. End summary.

¶2. (U) On May 26 at approximately 16:55 local time, a bomb exploded aboard a commuter train at the railway station in Dehiwala (a suburb of Colombo, situated just outside Colombo city limits, approximately 45 minutes drive south of the U.S. Embassy). Police sources confirmed eight dead and about 70 injured. Some of the wounded were reportedly hurt when they jumped off the train, rather than by the explosion itself. Sri Lankan media later said the death toll had risen to nine when one of the victims succumbed to his injuries.

¶3. (SBU) The bomb was reportedly a parcel placed in the overhead luggage rack of the passenger car and containing about 2 kilograms of explosive. An officer from the Bomb Disposal Unit surmised that someone remotely detonated the device since it exploded as the train was leaving the station, having taken aboard several additional passengers. He commented that the bomb contained no ball bearings or other shrapnel, with most of the damage and casualties caused by the concussion of the explosion itself. However, a government analyst told Embassy staff on May 27 that he believed that the bomb might have been detonated by a timer. He noted that while no materials that would confirm this were recovered from the crime scene, this was not unusual as most timer devices are made of plastic which melts in the heat of the explosion. Both sources said that the need to restart train operations had prevented an exhaustive examination of the crime scene. According to a television news report on May 27, police arrested one suspect who was being interrogated. He was reportedly a passenger in the carriage next to the one that contained the bomb.

¶4. (SBU) COMMENT: The Embassy has received no reports indicating that private American citizens were in proximity to the blast. Embassy security policies prohibit Amcit Embassy employees from using trains and buses as modes of transportation, and our travel warning recommends that private AmCits avoid public transportation. The government blamed the LTTE for the incident, which occurred days after security forces found and defused two bombs on passenger buses. The LTTE claimed that an Army Deep Penetration Unit had carried out a claymore attack on a civilian bus in LTTE-controlled territory on May 23, killing 16.

